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Hanoi Calls Peking's Demands on Refugees 'Absurd'

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HONG KONG, June 22—Vietnam's Foreign Ministry said today that two Chinese ships sent to evacuate ethnic Chinese from Vietnam were being prevented from landing because of "absurd" demands made by Peking.

In an official diplomatic note, the Vietnamese indicated that there were bitter procedural differences between Peking and Hanoi over the handling of the exodus of the Chinese. The two ships were originally supposed to have docked Tuesday at Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon, and at Haiphong, but they have apparently not been allowed to enter Vietnamese waters.

It seemed possible that, with neither side willing to be conciliatory, wrangling over the arrival of the ships would be added to the already long list of issues that have caused a split between the two Communist neighbors.

The dispute broke into the open this spring when China accused Vietnam of persecuting the 1.2 million ethnic Chinese living there, although the conflict had its origins in historical antipathy between the two nations and in Chinese suspicions that Hanoi has aligned itself with Moscow.

The argument over how to handle the evacuation follows China's release yesterday of a statement explaining that it had ordered Vietnam last weekend to close its three consulates in southern China because Hanoi had repeatedly delayed in fulfilling its promise to let China open consulates in Ho Chi Minh City, Haiphong and Da Nang. Peking charged that although Hanoi had agreed to the opening of the three Chinese consulates in December 1976, it had "refused again and again" to allow a team of Chinese consular officers go from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City to take up their posts.

In the dispute over the arrival of the two ships, Hanoi asserted today that China was unwilling to comply with normal Vietnamese emigration regulations.

Description of Refugees Disputed

Instead, the Vietnamese statement said, China had put forward six conditions of its own. One was that Vietnam accept Peking's description of the refugees as "Chinese residents who are victims of ostracism, persecution and expulsion by the Vietnamese authorities." Vietnam has evidently insisted, to China's annoyance, that the refugees be called "Vietnamese of Chinese descent" who simply "wish to leave Vietnam for China."

China also demanded, the Vietnamese said, that its embassy in Hanoi be allowed to decide which of the refugees would be allowed aboard the ships, and that the ships be allowed to stay in port as long as needed to finish the evacuation. Vietnam has said it will decide who is to be evacuated and that the ships may stay for only three days.

Hanoi's diplomatic note said it had rejected the "absurd requirements" during three days of negotiations with the Chinese.

It appeared to some diplomats in Hong Kong that Peking's demands were made as tough as they were in order to present a deliberate challenge to Hanoi rather than a careful negotiating position.

In a related development, two Hong Kong Communist newspapers, in articles said to have been written by their correspondents in China, reported that Vietnam's Defense Minister, Vo Nguyen Giap, had visited the area of the Chinese border

in January to inspect defense facilities in the company of Soviet military advisers.

The papers said the information came from Chinese refugees who had recently crossed into China from Vietnam. According to Chinese figures, over 130,000 ethnic Chinese have fled from Vietnam to China in the last two months.

The Hong Kong Communist papers also reported that Vietnamese forces along the border had recently been increased by 30 to 100 percent. One story said Vietnam was rushing to finish new military roads in the frontier region and that whole villages had been evacuated to form a buffer zone between the two countries.